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THIS WEEK

Week by Week 171
The Middle East: Prospects and Perils
by Norman Thomas 175
The Price of Power
by Gunnar D. Kumlien 178
The Catholic Worker
by John Cogley 180
Decline of the Western
by Walker Percy 181
The Sparrowmaker: A Poem
by Vernon Newton 183
The Screen
by Philip T. Hartung 183
Communications 184
Of Note: Ethics and Foreign Policy
by Gustave Weigel 185
Books 187

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

ECONOMIC HOT WAR

YEAR AFTER YEAR in the interval since World War II the ever-forward strides of the American economy have belied the Soviet theme that the collapse of our system was imminent. But the Soviet leaders continued apparently unshaken in this tenet of their Marxist faith. The deepening of our recession has raised their hopes that the long-awaited crack-up is at hand. There are certain aspects of the Kremlin's present stance which might be related to this fond hope: its recurringly aggressive tone, coupled with increasing technical and military proficiency, necessitating increases in our already onerous defense expenditures; Khrushchev's November declaration of economic warfare, followed by a series of Soviet agreements with key neutralist and even Western-oriented countries, an often uneconomic program costly for us to combat.

It is now reported that in the first quarter of 1958 the Sino-Soviet bloc actually surpassed American steel producers for the very first time. That this abundantly manned totalitarian economy, operating at forced draft, should narrow the wide gap between their production and ours during a low period in the course of our oscillating business cycle is hardly to be wondered at. Perhaps on some distant day the Soviet Union might even outproduce us over-all.

That highly problematical possibility, which has to be viewed in the light of comparative living standards in the two countries, is not the most urgent concern. It is rather the double-barreled effect of our recession and the Soviet foreign economic offensive on which attention needs to be focused. Among America's friends and allies, and especially among the uncommitted and underdeveloped countries, the Soviets are pressing home their contention as to the superiority of their economic system. They wield plenty of tangible evidence to show that their brand of socialism provides an effective means of bringing about transformation from the economic subservience resulting from mere raw material production to the national self-reliance based on the development of one's own industrial power. The Soviet Union and Communist China are persuasively proffered as prime examples of the surest way of advancing from a primitive, impoverished status to the eminence of an independent, modern industrial power.

Meanwhile, the American recession is causing wide havoc and considerable disaffection among those peoples who are dependent upon the sale of one or two basic commodities for American meal tables or major industries: coffee, sugar, tropical fruits, petroleum, zinc, copper, lead. Greatly to aggravate matters, American oil and mining interests are seeking and obtaining crippling import restrictions and higher tariffs. That such hard-pressed producers of raw materials should be amenable to Russian trade offers on seemingly easier terms is only to be expected. Accordingly, Soviet economic penetration registers important advances. And all this adds to the urgency of efforts to combat our recession here at home.

THE EVIDENCES of this country's state of hard times are unmistakable. The time has passed for refusing to admit the recession for political reasons; the Administration's spokesmen have to confine themselves to attempting to minimize it. A conservative two-party coalition has succeeded in cutting down the proposals of extended aid to the jobless. Other efforts to slow down the over-all decline by tackling such major distress areas as Detroit or by providing tax and other relief for hard-hit American railroads are not yet conclusive. Even the most optimistic do not believe that super-salesmanship alone will carry the day.

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When it comes to positive means of creating jobs, restoring confidence and starting a new upward turn for the national economy, fears of a new surge of inflation are genuine enough. The widening of the government deficit, through various tax reductions, or through federal appropriations or loans for public works that are greatly needed by the residents of many American communities, would tend to produce such a result. That is one reason the Administration clings to the hope that somehow the American economy can muddle through to a new pitch of prosperity.

But what if this protracted "wait-and-see" policy has worldwide consequences that would prove irreparable—if, for instance, this policy should result in the permanent loss of foreign markets that are vital to some of our larger industries? Can we afford to approach the recession at this late date as if it were simply a domestic affair? Beyond this, and from a longer view, how important for the future of the American economy, and indeed for the general national well-being, would Soviet penetration of such areas as the Middle East, Africa, the Far East and Latin America turn out to be?

Doubtless considerations such as these are back of the proposals which former Secretary of State Dean Acheson made at Detroit, May 3, at a political dinner. To begin with, he called for the strengthening not only of an isolated domestic economy but also of that of the free world as a whole. Mr. Acheson holds that this can be done only through appreciably increased private and government exports of capital from North America and Western Europe, a big rise in imports by the United States and the development of new means of extending international credit on a large scale. Certain of the obstacles to bringing such a general proposal into actual being would be lessened if responsibility were equitably shared among the NATO and other Western industrial powers. As an alternative to our present losing policy of drift it is worthy of the most thorough and sympathetic scrutiny.

PERSECUTION IN EAST GERMANY

IT IS unlikely that the Western world is going to forget the constant persecution which goes on behind the Iron Curtain. But conditions long endured tend to lose the immediacy of the meaning they once had for us. We need to be sharply reminded that the persecution is still present, still strong, and still resisted.

The Catholic bishops of East Germany recently gave witness to this resistance when they protested the intensified persecution of the Catholic faith in East Germany. In a pastoral letter read from pulpits throughout East Germany, they said that propaganda against the Church and religion was increasing, and that Catholics were losing their jobs because they refused to give up their faith. They called upon Catholics to withstand the pressures that were exerted upon them and their entire families.

The persecution of Catholics, who constitute about thirteen per cent of the population, and of the more numerous members of the Evangelical (Protestant) Church, is an insistent threat to these people, but it is also an unintended tribute to the resistance they have so long offered to the Communist regime.

POLITICAL DRAMATICS

RICHARD MILHOUS NIXON has been in the past, and he is right now, closer to being the thirty-fourth President of the United States than any other man in America. In terms of statistical probabilities, this is a plain fact, and there is no blinking it. Nevertheless, close as his Presidency has seemed to be on several occasions, and inevitable as his place on the 1960 Republican ticket has seemed, Mr. Nixon is not President and might never be President. In terms of statistical possibilities, this is a plain fact, too.

Nobody could be more aware of both these facts than the Vice President himself; nobody could be more burdened by them. And yet he carries this heavy knowledge with a combination of courage and caution which must impress even his political enemies.

As heir apparent to an extraordinarily popular President, conscious of the strong feeling against him within his own party as well as among Democrats, Mr. Nixon has had a difficult role to fill. During Mr. Eisenhower's serious illnesses, especially, the known-to-be-ambitious Vice President had to comport himself, before the nation, with a very delicate mixture of confidence and deference, readiness and hesitation.

He was able to do just this, in a manner which elated his friends and disappointed his enemies. But his trials went on. With no choice but to support the official Administration positions, he faced the necessity at the same time to protect his future with the people and the party when these positions were unpopular. He managed this too, sailing a

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precarious but on the whole amazingly successful course between criticizing and upholding the President's stands on such difficult issues as civil rights, the satellite and missile programs, and anti-recession measures.

Now, however, as a result of the President's words at a recent press conference, the complications of Mr. Nixon's situation have been multiplied again. Asked about his successor in 1960, Mr. Eisenhower passed up the obvious opportunity to advance the prospects of his Vice President. He endorsed no one, speaking only of "a lot of darn good men" in the Republican Party. Various interpretations of the President's failure to endorse Mr. Nixon have been put forth, along with various speculations as to what this development will mean in the subsequent behavior of the Vice President. The shrewdest analysis of the situation, we feel sure, has already been made by Mr. Nixon himself, but of course it is not available at this time.

Our interest in the Vice President's career is not based on any enthusiasm for his past political record or confidence in his present or future statesmanship, as we have from time to time made clear. But it is impossible not to be fascinated by the tactics of a political expert working at his profession, impossible not to be attentive as he grapples, before our eyes, with a destiny of such importance.

NUCLEAR STALEMATE

SECRETARY General of the U.N. Dag Hammarskjold was undoubtedly speaking for a good part of humanity when he said, in connection with the Arctic inspection zone proposed by the United States: "The stalemate in the field of disarmament has been permitted to last far too long." Clearly this was the reasoning behind Mr. Hammarskjold's unprecedented departure from strict neutrality to urge the Soviet Union to accept the United States proposal. And perhaps the unanimous approval of the U.S. proposal by all the Security Council nations except Russia also represented the feeling that some first step must be taken, rather than any conviction that the U.S. plan was necessarily the best one. At home and abroad, concern over the thermonuclear deadlock grows greater every day.

It is here, we think, that the Administration is going to miss Harold Stassen more and more in the months ahead. Mr. Stassen has made his fair share of political enemies inside the G.O.P., and he is considered by many people outside the Republican Party, as somehow "too eager," too ambitious. But as the Administration's "Secretary for Peace" he did show considerable ingenuity and an almost inexhaustible patience in the thankless business of negotiating with the Russians, and such men are not easy to come by.

Was the Administration glad to see Mr. Stassen go? Washington reports always had it that he and Mr. Dulles rarely saw eye-to-eye, and this is understandable enough, since Mr. Dulles is what is called "tough-minded" when it comes to international negotiations. And this too is probably as it should be. Every Administration needs a John Foster Dulles to cast a cold eye over proposed agreements, lest uncritical enthusiasm lead to national disaster. But these days, we are inclined to think, every government needs a Harold Stassen too, a man temperamentally predisposed to fresh ideas and new methods.

After the failure of the Arctic inspection plan, Mr. Hammarskjold said: "I have the feeling we have missed the bus and we should not be too sure that the road will remain open for buses in the future." No agreement on nuclear weapons can be reached, of course, if the Russians are determined not to have one. But we cannot give up, and with Mr. Stassen out of Washington and running hard for Governor of Pennsylvania, we just hope there is someone in the Administration who will take Mr. Hammarskjold's remarks as seriously as they should be taken.

LABOR LAWS

THE ATTITUDE of top labor officials toward the Senate committee investigating labor-management rackets has been perceptibily hardening for weeks. Officials of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. now make no secret of the fact that they think the committee's investigations are being used by anti-labor groups as an excuse for labor-busting legislation. And when one reads some of the anti-union statements that have been made recently it is easy enough to understand this growing conviction among labor leaders that they should stop cooperating with the committee and should oppose any attempt to pass labor legislation in this session of Congress.

And yet, as we have noted before, we think this is the wrong course for labor to follow. Carefully considered legislation in the field of labor-management relations need not—indeed, should not—be either anti-union or anti-management, and good legislation at this point would help rather than hurt

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the cause of decent unionism. As we see it, though, good legislation in this complex field cannot be had if it is hastily passed—a danger recently averted when Senator Knowland's amendments to the welfare fund bill were struck down—or if lack of cooperation of honest leaders of labor allows anti-union extremists to have their way by default.

We are happy, then, at the latest reports from Washington which say, first of all, that Senator Kennedy's subcommittee will begin hearings immediately with an eye to introducing a labor bill early in June, and, secondly, that President George Meany and other top officials of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. will cooperate in these efforts to solve some of the problems dramatized by Senator John McClellan's committee. The task is not easy, but if cool heads prevail, we are confident that legislation can be enacted to eliminate racketeers from the labor movement without in any way interfering with honest and well run unions.

LANGUAGES OF DIPLOMACY

THE HEIGHTENED reaction to the first sputniks brought hasty reappraisals of our own educational system and initial demands for more scientists and engineers. After a period of relative complacency, our country, to judge by the early statements, felt threatened and insecure. To repair our damaged prestige and to ensure our present position of world power we obviously needed, it was said, much greater concentration on the physical sciences.

Second thoughts have tended to be less defensive and more balanced. Once again people have successfully asserted the value of the liberal arts. And the study of foreign languages, one of the most neglected aspects of education in our country, has found unexpected encouragement. If our education is to be modified by the demands of the cold war, this, at least, is a tendency that our educators can warmly welcome.

In an address reprinted in part by the New York *Herald Tribune*, Henry Cabot Lodge pointed out certain paradoxes in the attitude of the American people. While desiring peace, they show an unconscious aversion to methods of diplomacy that would work toward it. There is relatively little difficulty in getting appropriations for military power, he pointed out, and studies leading toward military might are encouraged. This is, of course, desirable, but economic aid, which is one of the best means to prevent war, is always hard-pressed. And the need for increased knowledge of foreign languages seems rarely to be publicly acknowledged. Yet foreign languages are the channels for much of our diplomatic effort.

In developing this last point, Mr. Lodge made the following observations: In the Soviet Union every high school student must study one foreign language for six years and must learn, as a second foreign language, a language of Asia and Africa. There are now ten million Soviet students studying English. In contrast to this, half of the high schools in the United States teach no foreign language, and in those which do only fifteen per cent of the students study a foreign language for even as much as one year. Approximately eight thousand students in the United States are studying Russian.

One of the practical results of such conditions is that only half the officers in our Foreign Service are able to speak any foreign language well enough to conduct official business in it. Mr. Lodge's conclusion is pertinent and sharp. "It is not going to do much good," he said, "to have it recorded in the history books that Americans *wanted* to see freedom victorious over Communism if in that cause we cannot even be bothered to learn the language of another people."

NEGROES AND THE RECESSION

SOCIAL SCIENTISTS have always known that economic slumps hit minority racial groups particularly hard. Figures recently released by the New York State Commission against Discrimination illustrate how badly hit Negroes are by the current recession. As of last March, the unemployment rate among Negroes was more than twice that of white workers, and the gap between the two groups was increasing steadily. And if the experience of the 1953-54 slump is repeated, it can be expected that post-recession recovery among Negroes will be markedly slower than the recovery among whites.

Negro workers still suffer from discrimination, of course, but the fact that a higher percentage of Negroes than whites is out of work is probably also due to such factors as poorer educational qualifications, lack of adequate job training, and the like, which keep many Negroes in jobs where lay-offs are heaviest. In any case, though, whatever all the reasons behind them may be, the recently released statistics on unemployment demonstrate again the old truism about minority groups in this country: "Last hired, first fired."

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The Middle East:
Prospects and Perils

It is the Arab-Israel quarrel which is most likely to lead to a great conflagration

by NORMAN THOMAS

ANY MAN who writes on the troubled Middle East ought to present credentials. I spent six weeks, beginning November 1, 1957, traveling in Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Israel, in company with that fine Middle Eastern specialist, Dr. Don Peretz. My specific interests in going were to learn the fate of minorities in all these countries, Jews and Christians in the Arab nations, and Arabs in Israel; and to see if I could arrange to circulate in the Arab lands specific information in Arabic on conditions of life within Communist countries. The Labor Research Institute, with which I am connected, had done quite well in circulating such information in Latin America in conjunction with Latin American organizations. We were making similar arrangements for Tunisia and Morocco and wanted to see what could be done in the Middle East.

In brief, we found no *legal* discrimination against Jews and Christians in Egypt, Lebanon or Iraq. There is discrimination in Syria where some five or six thousand Jews have a very poor sort of life. In Egypt there is an uncomfortable degree of public discrimination against Jews and even against Coptic Christians, which is definitely not supported by President Nasser. In Israel, as is well known, Arabs are second-class citizens. Recent legislation on the registration of land will in their opinion rob them of some sixty thousand acres in addition to the three hundred thousand that Arabs still living in Israel have already lost.

On the other hand, there is a developing conscience in Israel about better relations with Arabs, and the representative group of Jews and Arabs now collaborating in publishing the magazine, *The New Outlook,* gives one hope for further progress.

As for my effort to arrange to circulate material such as the condensation of the five-nation report on Hungary, I had little success. Invariably I was told that doubtless what we had to say was true but relatively unimportant. "Zionism," they would tell me, "is our problem, not Communism. And your own country is very inconsistent in protesting the fate of Hungarians while it helps the French brutally to oppress the Algerians."

We talked with a great many Arabs, refugees, plain citizens and high officials, and found little Communism. On the other hand, Arab leaders from Nasser down are very sure that they can play with Russia and not pay a price. Warnings to the contrary roll like water off a duck's back. To mention one extreme case, I remember calling on the Red Millionaire, Khaleb el-Azam, then Minister of Defense, in Syria, in his palatial new home. While he criticized America, I was so seated as to confront an ugly, blown-up snapshot of himself, Khrushchev, Bulganin and Zhukov in Moscow, where he had negotiated a loan agreement of which he was very proud. I finally said, "I see that Your Excellency is a very wise man. You have a picture to remind you of your triumph but also as a kind of warning. Where is Zhukov?" "Oh," he said, "every country has to get rid of politicians and Zhukov isn't dead." That started quite a conversation about purges, bringing us around to the case of Jan Masaryk, Czechoslovakia's Foreign Minister, who in despair either jumped or was pushed out of a window in Prague. "Well," said el-Azam, "a good many high officials commit suicide. Didn't Forrestal in your country?" "You aren't seriously comparing the cases!" I exclaimed. "Yes," he replied. "Didn't the Zionists drive Forrestal to suicide?"

FORTUNATELY, el-Azam was a very extreme case and I am more hopeful about the future of

Mr. Thomas, six times the Socialist candidate for President, recently returned from the Middle East.

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the United Arab Republic because Nasser left this old opportunist, together with the ambitious general, Bhizri, out of his cabinet. It was, moreover, that excellent and relatively moderate man, Salah el-Bitar, Syria's Foreign Minister, who pushed through the final stages of unification between Syria and Egypt and is included in the new cabinet.

It would be easy for me to write about the Arab world mostly in terms of its hates. That would be unfair to the dynamism of awakening peoples, their zeal for education, and the improvement in the standing of their women. Despite quarrels and divisions, the great passion of the Arabs is for an almost mystical type of pan-Arabism. And it is a positive passion. The two unions, Egypt with Syria and Iraq with Jordan, were consummated with a speed I did not expect. At the time of our visit, Nasser and the Egyptians seemed rather lukewarm to unity. It was the Syrians who had a sentimental devotion to it. To their new United Arab Republic, the Arab Federation of Iraq and Jordan is in a sense the answer of the ruling cliques of these two monarchies. In both of them, Nasser is much more popular than their kings and the pressure of the people will inevitably be for a larger union.

Meanwhile this Arab Federation may serve to prevent a kind of explosion of the artificial state of Jordan as the result of internal and external pressures and thus, for a time, act as a guarantee of relative stability and peace. If Jordan had blown up or disintegrated, it would have created a vacuum of power which would have sucked in all its neighbors and precipitated a war whose end no man could predict. Despite the bitterness of their propaganda war, I do not think that there will soon be open conflict between the new Arab unions or of either against Lebanon. That little but relatively prosperous nation is a separate state chiefly because of the balance in it between Moslems and Christians. Its younger elements were, in our contacts with them, more passionately and articulately pan-Arabic than any group in Egypt. Christian Arabs were among the most vocal. Yet we discovered a considerable, if somewhat suppressed, anxiety among Lebanese Christians, lest pan-Arabism turn out to mean for them a disagreeable minority role in a Moslem world.

I have said that pan-Arabism is a positive and on the whole a constructive force. It is nevertheless often most articulate in expressing its dislikes and hates. The West, meaning France, Britain and the United States, is definitely the object of that dislike or hate, particularly the United States, in spite of our past good record in the area, because ours is the strongest country, the most definitely pro-Zionist, the best friend of kings and the corrupt cliques about them. At best the situation is difficult. In her present mood of benevolence to the Middle East, Russia has an immense advantage because of propinquity, belief in her military might but also in her desire for peace, her willingness to make political loans, and her lack of involvement with Israel on the one hand and foreign oil interests on the other.

BUT MR. Dulles has consistently managed to make bad matters worse. The Eisenhower Doctrine, always regarded with suspicion by the Arabs, is today virtually a dead letter. The Baghdad Pact is a source of military weakness. Iraq would bring no strength whatever to the West in any war. The Pact is unpopular at home as well as in the neighboring states in all of which it is believed to be nothing more than an open attempt to perpetuate colonialism on the old principle, divide and govern. Last summer, confronted with Syria's turn toward Russia and her inflated fear of Turkish attack, our State Department fumbled badly. Its first statement gave the Arabs some reason to fear that it would construe the Eisenhower Doctrine as a prohibition of the existence of a pro-Soviet government in Syria. This fear was allayed in subsequent statements but Mr. Dulles felt constrained "to do something." So he flamboyantly dispatched a relatively small consignment of arms to Jordan, not enough, a Jordanian told us, to do any good, but enough to worry both the Syrians and the Israeli.

Mr. Dulles' handling of affairs in Egypt was worse. Perhaps he was overhasty in committing us to aid in building the high dam at Aswan. Some Egyptians told us that perhaps better things could be done with the money. But he made the commitment. Later, because Nasser bought arms from the Soviet bloc, Mr. Dulles deliberately withdrew his offer in a way Egyptians found most insulting. The effect of this was temporarily more than offset by President Eisenhower's support of Egypt against the extraordinarily immoral and ill-advised aggression of our allies. But, apparently to appease those same allies, Mr. Dulles ordered CARE and its benevolent activities out of Egypt, and refused to let the Egyptians use any of their American dollars to buy wheat or Salk vaccine. The money ostensibly was blocked to assure payment of stockholders in the Suez Canal Company. Some of it, I believe, has been released in comparatively recent months, although claims and counter-claims on the Canal have not been finally settled.

The Canal itself is being very efficiently run and the Egyptians did a remarkable job in replacing the slum areas of Port Said, destroyed by Anglo-French bombing, with an admirable modern housing project. The result of all this is, as a Christian Coptic professor, no eulogist of Nasser, rather sadly told me, that among Egyptians generally and especially among the young people in the great Cairo University, America is today more unpopular than Great Britain. For, "at least we know where Britain stands."

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Our cause is further hurt by the indiscriminate abuse showered upon Nasser, who too often is described as if he were an Egyptian Hitler or Mussolini. That, as even Ben Gurion admitted in an interview, is not the case. He has made mistakes. His worst offense, I think, is his use of violent propaganda over the radio and in the press, a propaganda which he alleges is defensive because of attacks of "secret" stations of the Baghdad Pact nations against him. Maybe, but certainly his propaganda gets the more publicity.

THE REPUBLIC has given President Nasser practically dictatorial powers pending the adoption of the constitution, and he may become the dictator. He is, however, still genuinely interested in internal reforms in his terribly over-populated country and I got the impression that he has been taken up by the Arab world as a symbolic leader rather beyond his own original intention or expectation. He has been outspoken thus far in word and action against religious discrimination and the religious bigotry which some Moslems have tried to revive.

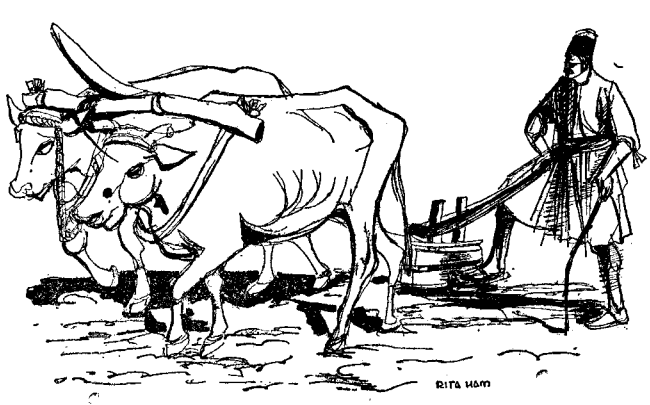
It is the Arab-Israel quarrel which, in the present mood both of Arabs and Israeli, is most insoluble, most responsible for Arab fear and hatred of the United States, and most likely to kindle the kind of brushfire which could grow into a great conflagration. Every thoughtful American is familiar with the Israeli case and the story of genuine achievement in the modern Zion. The Arab case is less well known. I am trying to put it together as told to me by comparative moderates.

"Israel," they say, "is an immigrant nation which intruded itself into territory long occupied by us and our ancestors. We Arab Moslems never persecuted the Jews as did you Christians. For your sins, you make us pay the price. Today by far the largest part of the arable land on which the Israeli live has simply been confiscated from Palestinian Arabs driven out by massacre and fear of the invaders. Israel is not and cannot be content with her present borders because she seeks ultimately the in-gathering of all the exiles, and the immediate influx of some million or more immigrant Jews into an area which cannot hold them. Does not Israel insist that it cannot hold any considerable number of Arabs repatriated from the miserable camps where upwards of a million of them now live? We should not fear this Israel except that it is the spearhead of the new Western imperialism, backed by France and by the United States. In the latter country Zionist political influence and control of means of communication are overpoweringly strong. Moreover, your government desires to keep the Arab world divided and therefore easier to manage in behalf of the oil interests."

Nowhere did I hear the hate-Israel doctrine more forcibly expressed than when we were lunching with some pro-American friends of the governing clique in Iraq. They were far more vehement than Nasser. Nuri as-Said, the strong man of Iraq, recently tried to persuade NATO and the Baghdad Pact nations to demand Israel to withdraw to the boundaries tentatively fixed by the U.N. partition plan of 1947. And this demand will probably recur with increasing frequency in the U.N. It will hardly satisfy the Arabs unless it is accompanied by a prohibition of further Jewish immigration and the return of the Arab refugees. To these demands, or even to a return to the fantastic boundaries of 1947, the Israeli will not submit. They have sound reason for refusing. It was the Arabs who originally rejected the partition plan. They appealed to the sword and lost. In Israel's ten years of national life the stream of history has run fast and deep and it is impossible to turn back to 1947. The effort would mean new strifes and hates on top of old—except perhaps for the internationalization of the now divided Jerusalem.

SO FAR the facts of life compel me to agree with the Israeli. Nevertheless, I do not believe that Ben Gurion's government can forever meet Arab demands simply with negatives or by armed might. His personal record and his government's is confusing. At times they have renounced the idea of expansion by force and argued that under modern conditions the territory now held by Israel will hold vast numbers of immigrants. But Herut, the second largest party, openly advocates an expansionist program, and the logic of Ben Gurion's speeches, and some of his own actions—for example, in the Sinai aggression —go far to justify Arab fear.

I had written thus far before Ben Gurion, in his well-publicized broadcast interview on April 20, definitely declared himself in favor of disarmament in the Middle East. More than that declaration is, of course, necessary to get any progress toward disarmament, but his declaration is a step forward. Conceivably it may make Mr. Dulles willing to explore the possibilities of a program of disengagement suggested by



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Russia as far back as February 1957. Disarmament in the Middle East can hardly stand alone. Agreements will require careful implementation. The best hope for them would be if it were understood that such agreements were steps toward general disarmament down to a police level under a strengthened United Nations.

Ben Gurion's statement makes it a little easier to write out a rational program beneficial to both Arabs and Israeli. It would involve economic cooperation for the development of the whole region with special regard not only to water but to oil. It would be based on an absolute repudiation of any intention by either side to expand by force, but a willingness to negotiate for adjustments of the present boundaries which seem likely to make continual border troubles almost inevitable in the future.

The harsh truth is that neither Israel nor the Arab states have heretofore treated the Arab refugees as individuals so much as political pawns in their struggle for power. These are living, breathing men, women and children, most of whom rot in the idleness of camps with nothing to do but think of the past. To them, Israel should make a far more generous offer of repatriation and of indemnification to those who cannot be repatriated or who might not even desire it were they to know all the facts. The United States as Israel's constant backer would have a moral obligation to help support the cost of such a process of indemnification and repatriation.

I believe it is the duty of Israel to make proposals of this sort in the most convincing possible manner. Although I do not believe they would be promptly accepted they would inevitably improve the atmosphere. Alas, I doubt if there can be a settlement of the Middle Eastern question unless and until there is a *modus vivendi* between Russia and the United States. Each side approaches the controversy with a feeling that it has a big brother standing by, ready and willing to take up the fight.

For their own reasons, the Russians ever since February 1957 have been urging what is, on the face of it, a policy of disengagement: a refusal by the big powers to interfere in the affairs of the smaller states and prohibition of the sales of arms. Our State Department has not condescended even to explore these proposals. The most probable reason is that to Moscow the Middle East includes Turkey, which country is our ally, host to some of our important bases. Thus are our problems of disengagement and disarmament around the world all tied together. Nevertheless, that cannot completely excuse Mr. Dulles' failure to explore the one practicable approach to peace in the Middle East. While the Middle East is the breeding ground of hate and strife and war, the future of mankind stands in jeopardy.

CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS IN ITALY

The Price of Power

by GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN

THERE IS a joke circulating in Italy these days about the Christian Democrats which goes something like this. A man presents himself at one of those T.V. quiz shows in which a contestant can win high prizes if he knows everything there is to know about any one subject. Asked about his subject, this man replied: the Christian Democrats. When the show's producers were informed about his topic, considerable embarrassment and long deliberations followed, until in the end he was offered the highest prize of all, if only he would not insist on appearing.

This joke is laughed at as much in the Vatican as anywhere else in the country, but it does give one an inkling of a problem here. The Christian Democrats have been in power for a long time, more than ten years now, and everything indicates that they will remain in power even after the forthcoming elections. Indeed, it is not improbable that they will be in power for another ten years and even more, for the simple reason that there is no conceivable alternative. And any political party, however democratic in the beginning, runs risks of deteriorating if it is in power too long, and particularly if there is no alternative to it. It is too easily transformed into a permanent political regime, with its established hierarchy of political leaders, each of whom has a sort of personal clientele. And in Italy, where family ties are strong, there is a more permanent danger of nepotism than in Northern

Mr. Kumlien, The Commonweal's regular correspondent in Rome, writes in anticipation of the coming Italian elections.

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Europe. Unkind references to "the second generation" among the leaders of Italian Christian Democracy are already common, and everybody knows the implication: the sons of great men are too often inferior to their fathers.

Yet there is no conceivable alternative to Christian Democracy. On the left, the two Italian Socialist parties have failed miserably to merge and form a single strong party which would be independent of the Communists and would represent a democratic alternative to the Christian Democrats. The left-wing Nenni Socialists, who immediately after Hungary broke their alliance with the Communists, have been unable to liberate themselves completely from them largely for reasons which are trival and humiliating: too many badly paid party functionaries receive regular gratuities from the Communists, which most of them can't do without. The other Socialist group, the Social-Democrats of Giuseppe Saragat, seem to be afraid on two scores. They fear the underground connections between the other Socialist group and the Communists, and they are reluctant to risk their chances of being included in a future collaboration with the Christian Democrats, with all the benefits which would be connected with this alliance.

ON THE Communist side there is another strange phenomenon. Since the uprising in Hungary the number of leading Communist intellectuals who have abandoned the party has been ever increasing. At the same time, the number of votes the party can reasonably expect in the forthcoming elections seems to stay about the same or even increase slightly. All smaller elections in different parts of Italy after the Hungarian uprising point in the same direction: no substantial losses either for the Christian Democrats or the Communists, possibly slight increases for both. There is a deep Communist crisis here, but it takes the form of a continuing loss of party membership—a drop of as much as one-tenth in one year has been confessed by the Communists themselves—not a loss of popular votes. What the Communists suffer is a loss of quality, for many who are leaving or have left the party are generally considered its real intellectuals. Yet, though the party may be losing some of its best brains, the rank and file who vote Communist have no confidence in their weak and divided Socialist neighbors. Thus the Socialist crisis has in a way neutralized the effects of the crisis inside the Communist Party caused by the events in Hungary.

As a result of all this, there is no democratic alternative to the Christian Democrats. An alternative that would include the Communists is impossible and an alternative without them is equally impossible. Thanks to the Communist threat, then, the Italian Christian Democrats are slowly changing from a political party into a permanent regime. In one sense, of course, the Communists are rendering a service to Christian Democracy, quite against their own will. But many Catholics in Italy deplore this state of affairs, which prevents their country from leading a normal democratic life by creating an unhealthy immobility, which is quite a different thing from stability.

YET THE CHRISTIAN Democrats did save democracy in Italy immediately after the war. Thanks to its leaders, who had managed to survive twenty years of Fascist totalitarianism inside and outside the country, a political miracle happened. The body of the nation not only was decontaminated of the consequences of Fascism, but it was saved from the Communist tide. The alliances of the Christian Democratic party were carefully chosen among other parties with clean records, and the greatness of a man like Alcide de Gasperi is being increasingly recognized with the passing of the years. Yet today a real problem remains to be faced—the temptations attendant upon the Christian Democrats' quasi-permanent power, which is almost inevitable in view of political conditions inside Italy.

Criticism of the Christian Democrats coming from the Communists can be safely ignored. But not so the criticism from independents or from Catholics. Some of its founding fathers have survived and what they have to say sounds like the voice of conscience. Among them are the Party's "grand old man," Don Luigi Sturzo, the priest who had to leave the country during Fascism and who is now a senator. What he says about petty bribery by low-level bureaucrats and not-so-petty profiteering and tax-dodging by high-level industrialists is bitter and unpleasant for many of his fellow-Christian Democrats to hear: it makes them feel neither like Christians nor like Democrats.

Naturally, all this should not be exaggerated, as it is by the Communists. But it has been too easy in recent years for the representatives of Christian Democracy to dismiss criticisms of this kind as "Communist propaganda," a charge to which it has been hard to reply, particularly for American observers. But Don Luigi Sturzo cannot be dismissed this way, nor can all the other Catholic critics of the Christian Democrats, whatever the outcome of the impending election.

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THE CATHOLIC WORKER

ON MAY 1 the Catholic Worker celebrated its twenty-fifth birthday. It was on May Day in the depths of the depression, 1933, that the first issue of the famous penny paper was distributed free in Union Square. It was a historic day for the Church in America, for through the C.W.—which soon expanded from a paper into a movement—a vast amount of untapped Catholic energy was released.

Over the years some of this energy was undoubtedly misdirected to utopian causes and half-baked schemes for remaking the world. But that sort of thing is inevitable when youthful idealism is engaged, as it always has been at the C.W. The Worker, which has existed for a quarter of a century without rules, regulations, memberships, committees or endowment and which has studiously rejected the techniques of organization and the counsels of worldly caution, has lasted longer than most of the soberly-conceived undertakings which were begun about the same time. In any real accounting, it must be held up as a model of efficiency and genuine prudence. It did what it set out to do.

It set out to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and house the homeless. It has done that day by day, hour by hour, for twenty-five years. It set out to get people talking and thinking about the things that really matter. It succeeded brilliantly here. It set out to recover the evangelical spirit and bear witness to the simplicities of the Gospel in the modern world. No one can equal its record in doing this. It set out to bring "scholar" and "worker"—in Peter Maurin's quaint classifications—together. To a remarkable degree this program too was a success.

From the beginning the *Catholic Worker* was pacifist-minded. That was the least remarkable thing about the paper when it first appeared, for in 1933 everyone talked like a pacifist. It was not until the Spanish Civil War, when the *Worker's* steadfastness was first tested, that pacifism became a major issue. By 1940 it had become the most controversial plank in the CW program, and it remains so today. But through war and peace the Worker has survived and for almost two decades now has never ceased to challenge the jingoism and patriotic extravagance found even in the Church. For years, whatever serious thinking was done about the moral problem of war was stimulated and in a perverse way encouraged by the C.W.'s insistence on non-resistance. I have long found it hard to take the paper very seriously on this question, because what it has had to say has usually struck me as simplistic, evasive and even sentimental. But I am now ready to admit that these very weaknesses may have been the *Worker's* great strength. Its position has been so extreme that it succeeded in making it impossible for non-pacifists like me to accept violence unthinkingly.

In the early days, the Catholic Worker used to talk about putting people back on the land and restoring an agrarian economy and way of life. Over the years there were heroic, sometimes quixotic, efforts made by groups and individuals to turn this part of the program into reality. Farming communes were actually established in several places. None of them turned out to be the model communities that Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day used to talk about so fervently, but a number of people seem to have found satisfaction and fulfillment in living according to their agrarian ideal.

Perhaps the Worker, for all its haphazard methods, was so successful in what it set out to do because its ambitions were so modest and its pretensions so few. Dorothy Day always put a great deal of emphasis on the "little way" of a Saint Francis or a Therese of Liseux. Here, I suspect, is the secret of the abiding vitality found in the movement. It is not impressed by the grandiose. It has little respect for power. It is never nervously worrying about its own public relations. Paradoxically, in willingly, even joyously, giving up these things it has gained them.

By insisting on translating the grandeur of Christian theology into such simple terms as feeding the hungry or nursing the sick, it has not belittled theology but enhanced its appeal. Many a young person who comes to the Worker unlettered in theology ends up eagerly devouring Augustine, Thomas and Bonaventure. The movement which never sought power has had more influence on more influential Catholics than any other single force in the American Church.

And public relations! By a kind of supreme irony, Dorothy Day, who has nothing but contempt for the ways of Madison Avenue, is one of the best known, best loved and best publicized Catholics in America. She has been the subject of a *New Yorker* profile, the subject of a New York *Times* "Woman of the Day" sketch; she has been written about almost reverently in almost every major magazine and newspaper in America.

She is a great woman, the very greatest we have. Historians will take the measure of American Catholicism, I suspect, by measuring our attitude toward her. They will recall that more than once now we let her go to jail without a single powerful voice being raised in her behalf. I am afraid they will be ashamed of us because we have not always had the good sense or the courage to be loudly, almost vociferously, proud of her.

JOHN COGLEY.

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We have traveled a long way from
"The Virginian," the best western of them all

Decline of the Western

by WALKER PERCY

IN THE SUMMER of 1882 Owen Wister paid a visit to Liszt, who was staying in Wagner's house in Bayreuth. Liszt was a great friend of Wister's grandmother, Fanny Kemble, and the young Wister, in Europe to begin his career as a composer, played for Liszt his latest composition—"Merlin and Vivien." Liszt "jumped up in the middle and stood behind me muttering approval." Later on, Fanny Kemble heard from Liszt that her grandson had *un talent pronouncé* for music.

But twenty years later, in Charleston, South Carolina, Wister was writing these words:

"Therefore Trampas spoke. 'You bet, you son-of-a ———.'

"The Virginian's pistol came out, and his hand lay on the table, holding it unaimed. And with a voice as gentle as ever, the voice that sounded almost like a caress, but drawling a very little more than usual, so that there was almost a space between each word, he issued his orders to the man Trampas:—

" 'When you call me that, *smile!*' And he looked at Trampas across the table."

The just published journals and letters of Owen Wister (*Owen Wister Out West.* Edited by Fanny Kemble Wister. University of Chicago Press. $5.) tell how it came about that this very nice, perhaps somewhat precious young Ivy Leaguer—described by Fanny Kemble as an "uncommonly clever boy . . . like most of his country's people deficient, I am sorry to say, in animal spirits"—should have written *The Virginian* and fixed once and for all the form of the American folk play, the western.

Owen Wister made fifteen long Western journeys, at first for his health, later as an escape from the practice of law, then finally, after publishing a cowboy story in *Harper's,* in quest of literary material. The journals were not discovered until after his death and now, drastically edited by his daughter, they reveal as much about the man as about the West of the eighties and nineties. Much of *The Virginian* comes from here. There is an eye for detail and a crispness of phrase which reminds one oddly of Hopkins' journals: "The strangest sunset; don't let me forget it. Over the bare plains in front, and all around us, a sluicy downpour of rain, the clouds brick red and luminous against the horizon, on which the sun, a blurred fluffy ball of yellowish light was resting, while continual streaks of blue lightning quivered down straight across the looming disc."

For him the West was Wyoming, and Wister loved it deeply. "Nobody, nobody who lives on the Atlantic strip, has a notion of what a sunrise and sunset and moonlight can be in his native land till he has come here to see." No one who has been to Jackson's Hole will disagree, even though Wister spoke of it as having been ruined by the nineties. But the air is the same. You can still see the Tetons looking as if they were not five miles away and ride toward them all day and not seem an inch closer. Yellowstone was Yellowstone then too. "The Park is an immense thing for the American bourgeoisie. Popper takes mommer and children in a big wagon with mules (!) and kitchen and beds, and forth they march, hundreds of miles, and summer in the Park." It is good to learn that he didn't like the geysers.

WISTER'S great achievement, *The Virginian,* is worth rereading today because it is still the best western, and because of the extraordinary Victorian trappings in which the formula, now so familiar, is tricked out. It is a love story! The Virginian and the schoolteacher Molly Wood read Browning during their courtship; and the story ends, not with the Virginian riding off alone into the sunset, but with their honeymoon in a romantic wilderness. The novel's Jamesian turn of phrase turns out to be no coincidence, for Henry James was a friend of the family and went over Wister's first book with him.

Wister's mother, however, was distinctly unimpressed with her son's creation. A great lady of Philadelphia, daughter of Fanny Kemble and Pierce Butler of the South Carolina Butlers, Susan B. Wister translated de Musset and wrote unsigned essays for the *Atlantic Monthly.* She made no bones about her opinion of *The Virginian:* the novel was badly constructed and all in all about the same stripe as Ouida.

Dr. Percy, a frequent contributor to The Commonweal, is a physician living in Louisiana.

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But Wister knew well enough he had hit upon something and he thought he knew where it came from—straight from *Morte d'Arthur*. Who were the first cowboys? "Saxon boys of picked courage (none but the plucky ones could survive) from South and North, from town and country. . . . From tournament to roundup! Deprive the Saxon of his horse and put him to forest-clearing or in a city-house for a couple of generations and you may pass him by without ever seeing that his legs are designed for the gripping of saddles." Whether this romantic version was the case, or whether the cowboy was a fieldhand on horseback doesn't matter much now. What matters is the significance for the present culture of the extraordinary folk figure Owen Wister created, the ritual action which takes place on thirty million T.V. sets every night, the good and bad of it, the innocence of it, the seductiveness of it, the impoverishment of it.

The originator of this myth must have been quite a person. Any man who can speak idiomatic French to Liszt and hunt big game with Corporal Skirdin and Dean Duke—who were "incarnations," as he called them, of his Virginian—is no ordinary dude. No doubt one reason he won the respect of this latter breed was that he never tried to go native. He always wore his English clothes in Medicine Bow—no jeans!—and even after ten years of Western wanderings, he never felt qualified to call himself one of them. He saw nothing unusual about writing westerns too bloody for *Harper's* to publish without bowdlerizing and playing Mozart quartets with his Philadelphia friends in between times.

WISTER saw the West in terms both romantic and political. The early cowboy was a gentleman, a man of "daring, laughter, endurance, a true nobility." But by 1900 he thought the nomadic, bachelor West was over and the housed, married West established—"everything reduced to the same flat prairie-like level of utilitarian civilization. Branans and Beeches will give way to Tweeds and Jay Goulds—and the ticker will replace the rifle." In his rededication of *The Virginian* to Theodore Roosevelt he condemns both Wall Street and the labor unions and calls for a rebirth of American faith.

What needs to be explored, however, is not the validity of Wister's romantic thesis about the evil of the city and the goodness of the wide open spaces. This is as may be. It does indeed strike one as a bit like Ouida or at least Rousseau. But even if it were true, not much could be done about it. A far more intriguing undertaking would be to trace the evolution of a folk art. What is it about *The Virginian* and the western at its best that is healthful in the way that a good art is always healthful? And what is it about the T.V. western that both seduces and impoverishes, that keeps one watching and yet leaves one with the feeling that he has been defrauded of an hour of his time and a portion of his sanity?

For the ironical fact is that the cowboy hero whom Wister put forward as the last American individual is now the staple commodity of the very drummers Wister detested ("Talk in smoke compartment far superior today—no damned drummers"). Someone calculated recently that there are sixty-nine continuing westerns on television. Is it because Wister has prevailed, and James Arness, Clint Walker, et al., are portraying the true individual and showing us the way back to honor and virtue? Has not the western been called the modern morality play? Don't the good guys always win? Or could it be the case that T.V.'s Marshall Dillon and Wyatt Earp are themselves symptoms of the sickness of the "Atlantic strip"?

One is disillusioned, by the way, to read that in Wister's opinion the Earps were merely tinhorns and thugs, murderers of unarmed victims. If this is the case, the information should certainly be withheld from the rising generation. For if Wyatt Earp was a phony, what happens to morality? How can one tell the good guys from the bad guys?

The truth is, I suspect, that the western has come to be the native expression of that very anonymity of which the Virginian was conceived as the antithesis. We see this in the gradual loss of identity of the western hero over the years. Who is he? He is not a person at all in the same sense that other people are persons. It is impossible to imagine him with a wife and family or even with a married sister. He has no human kin. He is deracinated. At the end of the story the other folks are restored to home and fireside, but the hero withdraws or moves on. The Virginian, on the other hand, is quite human. He is full of good humor and horseplay. He loves women. But one can already see the formula working under the flesh. Pare away all that is human and there will still remain the efficacious T.V. hero, the abstract locus of perfection, solitude, and violence.

THE VALUES of the T.V. western are counterfeit. They are offered and accepted at a face value, but at the same time a hidden traffic is going on under the counter. For example, the hero is put forward as the surest and easiest of men. He appears quite certain of himself; he is a tower of strength to whom all others turn. He has the fastest draw and the best eye in the territory. Yet the fact is that he and the story are sodden with anxiety. Everything, absolutely everything depends on a perfection of gesture. In an almost Oriental game of face-saving and losing, stare and counter-stare, he stands at any moment to lose everything. It would not be so bad to be killed. But suppose one's gesture didn't come off? Suppose, as one pushed

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his hat back with his thumb, he pushed too far and the hat fell off? What would happen? Nothing. The scene would be refilmed. The hero can't lose. But what of the viewer? What charge of anxiety is he storing up by taking on this ritual dance night after night?

The Christian values of kindness and nonviolence are repeatedly affirmed—the modern western is, on the surface, a far more moral business than *The Virginian* (whose hero swore, drank whiskey, took part in a lynching, made fun of preachers). Our new western hero is the kindest, most peaceable of men. He can't stand to see even dogs mistreated. He has a great store of moral indignation. He doesn't kill unless he has to—but he always has to. And he had better keep on killing if he values his Trendex. Even when the hero is a parson who has hung up his guns and even though the good woman tells him that it takes more courage to be thought a coward than to gunfight, in the end he always buckles on the guns.

Afterwards he blows the smoke out of his pistol and walks away ignoring the crowd. But in truth he knows and the crowd knows that this is the best of times, the moment of killing, feet planted wide apart in the dusty street. Nor can he really ignore the crowd. He depends on it even more than it depends on him.

No doubt Wister was correct in tracing his Virginian back to chivalry. Then too all manner of bloodletting and face-saving and -losing was allowed as long as virtue and womanhood were nominally defended. But Roland finally ran into Don Quixote and we heard no more about Roland. It should happen to Marshall Dillon—otherwise how can we stop watching him?

THE SPARROWMAKER

The boy was scarce to his father's knee
When he fashioned choirs of sparrows
From the carpenter's floor.
He sent them singing merrily
Out of the door,
Clapping his hands for the joy he had made.

Come hear, he said,
Come hear what has happened to the dog-
wood tree!

And the carpenter came and smiled,
Gnarled hand on tousled head,
And said, My child,
And said, O more than mine, O child
Who has made of boughs a music,
What wood was ever so happy before?

Turning as though gnarled hands had heard
Joy's hammer clang on joy's own tree.

VERNON NEWTON.

THE SCREEN

YES, MY DARLING DAUGHTER

THE MUSICAL version of "Gigi" stems, of course, from the original novel by Colette, as well as from experience with previous adaptations for a French movie and for the stage. Certainly Colette's story about a young turn-of-the-century French girl is a natural for a musical comedy; it has just enough plot to hold one's interest as it tells about a refreshing and charming youngster who outsmarts her elders and who is better than her so-called betters who trained her not for marriage but to be a well-kept woman. And Arthur Freed's production has all the glitter and glamor of pretty, naughty, frivolous Paris of 1900. Not only the good cast, which is superbly directed by Vincente Minnelli, but everyone connected with "Gigi" did his best to make it a whirl of a success.

Cecil Beaton, who gave the production its brilliant design with lovely costumes and sets, has used Paris elaborately as background, and background and color are then successfully integrated into story in the stunning CinemaScope photography. In the same way the music by Frederick Loewe and the lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner (who also wrote the screenplay) are definitely part of the whole; the fact that this score is somewhat reminiscent of their "My Fair Lady" songs does not lessen its attractiveness or its effectiveness in advancing the plot. It's been a long time since a cast seems to be having so much fun enacting a story—dancing it, singing it and romping through it. And it's a good thing that Minnelli handled his people with such a light touch; the story's attitude toward love and life is so blasé and sophisticated that the whole film might have become vicious if it hadn't been handled carefully.

Leslie Caron, even more charming than she was as Lili, is absolutely right as Gigi, the appealing youngster who humbly submits to her family's lessons in the world of amour but foxes them all in the end. Miss Caron gives the role a delightful lift (her songs are nicely sung by Betty Wand), and her warm portrayal contrasts beautifully with all the sophistication around her. Her elders are well played too: Isabel Jeans as her great-aunt who is unrelenting in her efforts to teach Gigi the manners of a decadent society; Hermione Gingold as her grandmother who really cares about the girl; Maurice Chevalier as an old friend of the family who still has an eye for beauties and sings "Thank Heaven for Little Girls" and "I'm Glad I'm Not Young Anymore," as well as teaming up with Miss Gingold in a clever duet, "I Remember It Well." Louis Jourdan is appropriately cynical and bored as the playboy and then full of joie de vivre when he realizes Gigi has grown up and he has fallen in love with her.

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Fittingly, "Gigi" has songs about Parisians, champagne, Maxim's, boredom and other turn-of-the-century subjects that have more than an historical interest; and the production numbers are handsomely and imaginatively staged. In spite of all its luster, though, the success of the picture depends on Gigi's victory, and she wins on her own terms.

ALTHOUGH it too has a great deal to say about boredom, "Uncle Vanya" is as different from "Gigi" as day from night. In their way, however, Colette and Chekhov are not so many miles apart. Both were interested in depicting people of their time, and both depended on mood. While Chekhov's moodiness in "Uncle Vanya" may seem considerably more somber than Colette's, Chekhov has his humor too, and if one listens carefully, one will find a great deal to laugh at.

The trouble with "Uncle Vanya" as a movie, however, is that it isn't a movie at all, but a filmed play. This is not, I hasten to say, the worst artistic sin in the world, especially when the production is as good as this one. Starting with last year's off-Broadway show, which used the Stark Young translation, Franchot Tone produced this film with Marion Parsonnet and directed it with John Goetz. Perhaps a lack of funds limited them from spreading out into a real movie, but their filmed play is definitely worth seeing and, more particularly, worth hearing.

The cast, many of the members of which were in the stage production, is excellent, particularly Tone as the hard-working, hard-drinking, cynical doctor in love with the professor's wife; George Voskovec as frustrated Uncle Vanya who manages the professor's estate and is also in love with his wife; Clarence Derwent as the pompous professor who tries to run everyone's life and keeps yapping about the fact that all he wants is a quiet old age; Peggy McCay as the professor's plain daughter hopelessly in love with the doctor; and Mary Perry as the placid old nurse who comes up with some of the sanest remarks in the endless talk that goes on in the 1896 Russian country house. As the professor's young and very, very bored wife, Dolores Dorn-Heft looks lovely, but she has a static quality in her acting that is even more pronounced in a static movie like this.

They all talk and talk—about the heat and the estate and life and peasants and themselves. Ennui prevails, but it is still fascinating talk because Chekhov lets each person reveal himself and what he wants and what he gets. I'm sorry "Uncle Vanya" couldn't have moved out into the open and couldn't have been more of a movie, but it is still a stimulating film. And with all its cinematic flaws, perhaps "Uncle Vanya," with its simple black and white photography, has caught the true feel of Russia better than the elaborate films depicting that country with starry casts and Technicolor.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"NOT BURNEY, BUT KEMBLE"

Yonkers, N. Y.

TO THE EDITORS: Concerning Anne Fremantle's review of Maritain's new book [Mar. 14]:

Three Fanny's I grant you
Sufficient to daunt you
So Mrs. Trollope's sex you dissemble;
But as for the other,
I place a demurrer:
Her name is not Burney, but Kemble.

MARIE YANARELLA.

MORE ON DOCTORS

Ojai, Calif.

TO THE EDITORS: Once again it's necessary to bring a few hard facts to your attention [re "Need for Doctors," Mar. 14]. . . .

There have been a good many medical schools opened recently. In New York, Albert Einstein, and across the river in Jersey, Seton Hall; two new schools in Florida. Several two-year schools have become full four-year institutions: the Universities of Mississippi, Missouri, West Virginia and South Dakota come to mind.

The concern of the medical profession is with the quality of the school and its products. You will readily understand that a school which releases half-trained graduates on an unsuspecting public assumes considerable responsibility. You will also realize that the supply of individuals with the moral, physical and educational requirements is limited.

What is necessary to open a medical school? First, lots of money. Measured in the millions. Tuition will bring less than half of current expenses. Second, a metropolitan location, for several reasons. A top-flight faculty of several hundred clinical instructors is needed. These men can be found usually only in a metropolitan area. Next, a good supply of clinical material (patients) must be found. The universality of health insurance has made this a critical shortage. For example American College of Surgeons spokesmen have noted a dearth of free patients for the training of young surgeons. Tied in with this is the lack of cadavers for anatomic dissection of which anatomists complain. Here again the general prosperity of the country is to blame. This is a serious shortage. I can think of no metropolitan area not already well saturated with medical schools.

A third requirement is a ready supply of biochemists, biologists, physiologists, pharmacologists—men who are qualified in scientific fields allied to medicine and who provide instruction in the sciences basic to medi-

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cine. The nation-wide shortage of scientists extends to these fields.

The idea that organized medicine is engaged in a great conspriracy to limit the number of doctors is absurd. Doctors still recall the time at the turn of the century when there were many more medical schools than there are today. Most of them were little better than diploma mills. American and Canadian medical schools are the finest in the world and we see no reason to dilute their high quality. J. L. KIRCH, M.D.

OF NOTE

ETHICS AND FOREIGN POLICY

THE PLACE OF ethics in foreign policy is discussed by Father Gustave Weigel, S.J., in the April issue of *Worldview,* a journal of ethics and foreign affairs (170 East 64th Street, New York 21; $2. per year). A substantial excerpt follows.

I think that it is safe to say that the norm of amoral pragmatism for politics is being subjected to withering criticism in our time. Our problem is how can we make ethics dynamically relevant to public policy. . . .

One easy answer which might at first sight appeal to religious groups is to ask statesmen to follow the enlightened religious conscience of the community. In the abstract, this seems a good solution. In the concrete, I submit, it will not work. . . .

The reasons for this are two. In a society where religion is pluralistic, there may be a coincidence of consciences in certain areas, but there can be no consensus. There is a difference between coincidence and consensus. What is more, the moments of coincidence will not be many. The second reason is that the number of citizens in whom religion is highly dynamic will never be large enough to make a telling impact on the statesmen. Men are generally religious to some degree, but in the vast majority this degree is low. . . .

The only solution that I can see for the problem of making policy-makers conscious of ethical obligation is to bring back to honor the notion of natural law. Yet this word itself causes a malaise for many in our time. One almost hears a groan and the words: "No, not that again!"

This malaise is understandable because of the way the notion of natural law was used in the past. . . . Symbolic expressions like "the law written in the heart of man" do not help to clarify the notion at all. Rather, they distort it.

Perhaps the biggest error made by the older champions of natural law was their attempt to use it as the deductive condensation of a full and complete set of laws for human conduct in every conceivable contingency. They went so far as to insist that positive law was a mere explicitation of logical implicits of some corpus of law written in heaven, Olympus, or what have you. That celestial resumé of law was the natural law. Unfortunately, different devotees of the natural law could not agree on the propositions of the heavenly law which by their postulate was supposed to be translucent to mere reason. . . .

Such arbitrary willfulness made the concept of natural law odious. Yet the great masters of natural law like Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas had no such theory of natural law. The natural law is not a law in the sense that a lawyer uses the term. It is the pointer to a philosophical intuition. According to this intuition reality and reason coincide exactly in their structures.

The same truth can be expressed in the following way: the real is rationally structured. This principle is the basis of all thinking and it alone justifies the thinking enterprise of man. We would not bother to think unless we were convinced that by thinking we achieve the real, enabling us to deal with it adequately. Every thinker in some form or other, with some formula or other, asserts that prior to his thinking effort, reason and the real are built alike, and when I use reason according to its own dynamism, I achieve the real in its own proper being. . . .

The principle of the rational structure of reality allows us to approach problems of action with a norm. The norm is not a law; not a dictate. It is a simple illumination. With this light lawmakers and policy framers can set up rules for their work, but such rules are not logically deduced by a mathematical process. Aquinas wisely saw that the natural law in its application to different cultural situations produced different kinds of laws. In such divergent laws there was a generic commonality. Aquinas did not call the common factor natural law. He called it the law of nations, but meant by it something less arbitrary and conventional than what we call international law.

With a frank and general acceptation of natural law by our thinkers and statesmen, ethics would indeed direct state policy. Natural law is not a religious concept, and it will function in a non-religious atmosphere. It does, however, demand that action be based on something deeper than shallow empiricism and pragmatism. It does suppose that metaphysics is as important as physics or psychology. It does imply that the human spirit can see more than the phenomena of reality. It is an assertion that the human mind can reach *das-Ding-an-sich,* reality in its own being. It is an affirmation that there is a public philosophy, for which Walter Lippmann pleads. . . .

It is true that there have been theologians who have

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been disdainful of the natural law concept. Their thinking is pessimistic, contemptuous of the powers of man's reason. Yet their quarrel with reason is not abstract. They are perfectly willing to concede that reason in the abstract is quite godly, but they insist that in sinful man it will never function in a godly way. Such theologians hold for some kind of total depravity of man in all that he is. Yet even these theologians cannot escape man's tyrannical impulse toward rational justification, for they defend their anti-rationalism with the instrument of reason.

In the theology of total depravity there is a solid kernel of truth. Man is subject to Original Sin—or to the Freudian libidinous impulse, if one prefers that term to describe the drive toward the irrational always operative in man. It is the function of religion to show us a counteracting force capable of supplying us with the balance we need. The term usually used in theology for this counteracting power is grace. But grace falls on the individual, not on a community, even though a community itself may be the medium of grace. Government is something communal, not individual, even though the governor is always an individual. . . .

The recognition of Original Sin will discipline our hopes for human action, individual or communal. Even a frank and sincere use of reason will not be thoroughly rational because of the irrational push in all things human. However, even in this precarious condition reason is still our best instrument, and it is the one valid source of criticism and foresight.

Nor will the religious man find the natural law concept too poor for his own witness of faith to the community. Much indeed we cannot know without revelation, but all we do know by revelation can be expressed at least in terms of approximation by the concepts of natural law. After all, revelation is always expressed in symbols and the symbols are taken from things we know naturally.

This truth was seen vividly by Plato. In the *Eutrypho* Socrates asks Eutrypho what is justice, and he receives the answer that it is the fulfilling of the will of the gods. Socrates then asks whether an action is just and good because the gods will it, or do the gods will it because it is good in itself. Eutrypho could not answer.

Yet Socrates was proposing the notion of natural law, and he showed that it was necessarily acceptable to the religious man. If by my faith I have an ethics, then I justify my moral scheme by the reflection that God wants it, and, of course, "Thy will be done." However, Plato points out cannily that God's will cannot make the wrong right. Hence God's will shows what is right in itself. God wants the good because it is good. It is not good just because He wants it. . . .

Certainly we are well aware that a foreign policy unmindful of ethical burdens will bring us and millions of others into misery and distress. Virtuous action may not be triumphant in the moment of its positing, but in the long run it alone will solve the problems which confront man. Nor can we foolishly be consoled with the languid reflection that viciousness always enters into our virtuous deeds. That is true enough, but it still remains true that half a loaf is better than no bread at all.

Relativistic ethics or pragmatism as norms for action are self-defeating. These are not forms of morality, but the very denial of ethics. But we are perforce moral. Kant's romantic phrase, the categorical imperative, had much to recommend it. Morality is categorical, absolute in its demands. Our important task is to find out what morality reality itself exacts. Because an amoral or immoral approach to reality will only shatter reality and ultimately render it useless for man.

Above all I would insist that only by the use of the natural law concept can religious men talk effectively to government and the commonwealth.

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Revealing Biography of Newman's Spirit

NEWMAN: HIS LIFE AND SPIRITUALITY. By Louis Bouyer. Translated by J. Lewis May. Kenedy. $7.50.

By PHILIP DEASY

WHEN Frederick Wilhelmsen reviewed *Newman: Autobiographical Writings* for The Commonweal a year ago he noted that "all future judgments about Newman must be squared" with what the writings so tellingly, often pitilessly, revealed. He might have added that the judgment of one Newman scholar, Father Louis Bouyer, a member of the Theological Faculty of the University of Paris, and like Newman an Oratorian and a convert, had already been formed on these autobiographical writings, and formed, one is tempted to say, definitively. Father Bouyer was given full access to the then vast unpublished autobiographical material, later to be edited by Father Henry Tristram to whom Father Bouyer dedicates his book. The French edition of the autobiographical writings contained revisions and notes by Father Bouyer himself.

Since Mr. Wilhelmsen singled out Newman's journal, "My Illness in Sicily" as showing conclusively that that breakdown had a more profound effect on Newman's subsequent life than any of the illnesses he suffered at Oxford, one can only recommend Chapter VII of Father Bouyer's book. There one will find the fullest corroboration of this contention in the characteristically masterly analysis Father Bouyer makes of Newman's record. Only one other document, Father Bouyer thinks, is more important for plucking out the heart of the Newman mystery and that is the record Newman kept while preparing for his ordination as a Catholic priest at the Jesuit Retreat House in Rome. (This record is given both in Latin and in English in *The Autobiographical Writings.*) Father Bouyer again subjects this document to a most penetrating and rewarding analysis. A striking indication of his up-to-date approach is that he begins his analysis with the comment: "Psychologists like Jung and his school who have made the middle-age climacteric their special study could not wish for a more revealing document."

It was Dwight Culler, in *The Imperial Intellect,* who underestimated the importance of Newman's Sicily illness and thus misunderstood the real nature of the tension underlying the simple statement in the *Apologia:* "The truth is I was beginning to prefer intellectual excellence to moral." With respect to *The Imperial Intellect* Father Bouyer's *Newman* is at once a complement and a corrective. It is also to some extent a counterpart insofar as the one is as primarily concerned with Newman's intellectual development as the other is with his spiritual growth. Where *Newman* most directly complements *The Imperial Intellect* is in Father Bouyer's convincingly upheld view that Newman's "crowning achievement was to bring about so perfect an alliance between intellectual distinction and spiritual excellence that what Father Przywara says of him seems in no way an overstatement: "What St. Augustine was for the ancient world, what St. Thomas Aquinas was for the Middle Ages, that Newman must be held to be in relation to the world of today."

If Newman has that relation it is fundamentally because of his profound and enlightened conception of the intellectual apostolate. In that as in so much else, Newman was far ahead of his time, considerably too far for men like Dr. Cullen (the archbishop who invited him to establish the Catholic University of Ireland) to understand, or even for many of his own brethren of the Oratory, who were, in effect scandalized at Newman's insistence that their vocation as priests in the modern world was an intellectual vocation calling them to win back to religion the agnostic liberal mind.

Father Bouyer is especially forceful in impressing the reader with Newman's contemporaneity. He is scarcely less so in his emphasis on the great Cardinal's sanctity. In one of the book's most touching passages, he takes up the oft repeated charge that Newman was too much given to an almost morbidly acute sensibility to merit canonization: "Grant that Newman's nervous constitution was in fact as exquisitely sensitive as we are asked to believe, whence comes the idea that sanctity, or the lack of it, is a matter of temperament? Is it only such hardy spirits as are by nature more or less inured or impervious to human sorrow, who are to be judged worthy of being honored as saints? How are we to judge of sanctity if not by merit? Where, then, is the greater merit? In those whom an equilibrium easily acquired and readily retained preserves from suffering? Or in those who suffer, and suffer, some may deem, too bitterly?"

Newman: His Life and Spirituality is not biography in the conventional sense. The old and familiar story is re-told, but with a difference. Just as Father Bouyer refers to Newman's *Journal* as "a diary of the spirit," so may this book be called a biography of the spirit. It is not the external events, but their inner significance, their effect on the mind and soul of Newman that concerns the author. He has said that his absorption in Newman has been the fondest and most enduring interest of his life. Of that his book bears amplest evidence. *Cor ad Cor Loquitur* was Newman's motto on his cardinal's coat of arms. It could well be a fitting inscription to this book. For when all due credit and recognition have been paid Father Bouyer for his superlative critical intelligence, the power and conviction of his acute psychological probing into the labyrinthine maze of the Newman personality, it must still be added that this is above all else a book written with heart—a wise and an understanding heart. It is this

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quality of the book that gives one, after finishing it, the sense of having undergone a deeply inspiring personal experience.

A final word should be said of J. Lewis May's translation. Except for a few widely scattered minor flaws it, too, is deserving of highest praise. It communicates to the reader in English what must surely be in its original French a prose style of great beauty and force, one, in fact, worthy of the book's subject and his own incomparable mastery of expression.

Multiple View

FRANZ KAFKA TODAY. Edited by Angel Flores and Homer Swander. University of Wisconsin Press. $5.

By VIVIAN MERCIER

IT IS good to see a book which lives up to its title. Although Professor Flores of Queens College has organized four earlier symposia on Kafka, the present volume contains no hangovers from them. We can measure how much this is a book of *today* by comparing it with Professor Flores' critical anthology of 1946, *The Kafka Problem*. Yesterday's undisciplined horde of mutually exclusive interpretations has become today's well-drilled army of reasonably compatible views. It comes almost as a relief to find a surviving example of the old head-on collisions—that between Mark Spilka and Lienhard Bergel about whether the ending of *Amerika* is optimistic or pessimistic. Donald Pearce and Homer Swander fail to agree about the villagers in *The Castle*—the former viewing them as participants in an idyll, while the latter regards them as ugly, cowering boors—but I believe both trace the same over-all tendency in the novel.

Another novelty: Max Brod—Kafka's biographer and close friend, editor of *The Trial, The Castle,* and *Amerika*—has been dethroned. I have never been able to take him quite seriously as either critic or editor since I read his rambling and self-centered biography of Kafka, but his prestige remained immense for years. *Franz Kafka Today* includes among its eighteen essays—some running to twenty or more pages—just four pages by Brod. Mr. Swander explicitly rejects Brod's interpretation of *The Castle*. while Herman Uyttersprot—who. by looking exactly one inch ahead of his nose, has discovered clues which everybody else had overlooked—proves that Brod arranged the completed chapters of *The Trial* in the wrong order.

Whereas Brod maintained that almost all Kafka's work consisted of religious (or even specifically Zionist) allegories, the view which is beginning to prevail insists on multiple interpretation. Basil Busacca sums up the new attitude brilliantly by comparing Kafka's "fables" with those of Aesop, which can always be applied to fresh situations: "thus we tell the child who says that 'spelling is silly' after he fails to spell correctly that he should 'remember the fox and the grapes.'" Mr. Busacca goes on to point out how easily Kafka's explicators "have 'proved' the analogies between given texts and a variety of political, moral, economic, religious, sexual, biographical, historical, and other contexts." Unfortunately, "almost all of them share a logical fallacy, which is to assume *not only* that the story of the fox and the grapes *can* refer to the child who can't spell, but *also* that it *can refer to no other situation.* The analogues offered by the explicators are perfectly sound; what is ridiculous is the insistence of each explicator that the others are wrong." He then offers four sample interpretations of the short story "The Country Doctor." Similarly, when teaching *The Trial,* I suggest four or five interpretations before hinting that perhaps Kafka has succeeded in finding a symbol for the human situation *as a whole*—a symbol which can therefore represent in turn every aspect of that situation.

In the briefest possible introduction, the editors explain that their purpose has been to bring together "some of those essays which . . . let the work of art speak forcibly for itself." Accordingly, they have grouped the essays into three "Parts" by subject matter: "The Short Stories," "The Novels," and "Diaries and Letters." Anybody who doubts whether Part Three concerns itself with works of art should read Werner Vordtriede on the *Letters to Milena.* Mr. Vordtriede describes Kafka's entire output—fiction, diaries, letters—as "the most carefully considered network of misleading statements which exists in any literature." It is refreshing to find a Devil's Advocate in such a book, most of whose contributors express nothing but the highest admiration for Kafka as both man and writer.

Part four, "Bibliographies and Index," fills forty pages and contains both a list of the available English translations from Kafka and a bibliography of the biographical and critical works about him in at least ten European languages. This section alone would be worth the price of admission.

Can the definitive critical study of Kafka and his work now be written? We might as profitably ask the same question about Dante. Goethe or Shakespeare, to all of whom W. H. Auden has compared him. Let us take warning from the opening sentence of Mr. Swander's essay on *The Castle*: "Nothing seems unqualifiedly true of Kafka or his work!"

The Meaning of '28

AL SMITH AND HIS AMERICA. By Oscar Handlin. Little, Brown. $3.50.

By VICTOR C. FERKISS

FOR many years Harvard historian Oscar Handlin has devoted himself to chronicling the triumphs of American minorities. It is not too surprising, therefore, that he should choose as the subject of his first biography Al Smith, son of New York's lower East Side, whose defeat in 1928 seemed to prove that some Americans are more equal than others.

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In this highly laudatory biography, Oscar Handlin presents Smith as the foremost political representative of a milieu whose virtues have been too little appreciated by other Americans, including most American historians. He favorably contrasts Smith's pragmatic liberalism with the wild-eyed, superficial schemes of Nativist-tainted Progressives and with the evasions of basic problems by patrician snobs, among whom he numbers Franklin Roosevelt at least until his assumption of the Presidency. Mr. Handlin even manages to excuse Smith's erratic behavior in his embittered later years as the aberrations of one who, once removed from the practical political role which gave him intellectual sustenance, could not comprehend that times had changed.

Mr. Handlin is primarily concerned, in this small, tersely-written book, with giving Smith his proper place in American history rather than with providing us with a rounded picture of Smith the man. It is Smith's world rather than Smith himself which is at the center of Handlin's stage. Smith was the product of an urban, immigrant world—a world in which the sweatshop was a personal experience rather than an abstract social problem. He rose to political power through loyalty to a political machine which served that world by giving it what it seemed to want and need. For Oscar Handlin, as for Smith, Tammany is to be judged not by its financial delinquencies but by the fact that, through the party it dominated, Smith was able to make of New York state a leader in matters of social legislation. The administration which Smith gave New York state was not only oriented toward the needs of the average citizen but was, despite his origins, both efficient and honest. Nonetheless, human warmth rather than outward uprightness is for Mr. Handlin the touchstone of the creative statesman. Tammany at its worst is to be preferred to the bigoted and puritanical Midwest and South at their best since, in democratic politics, compromisers are always preferable to crusaders.

The central theme of Mr. Handlin's book is the meaning of 1928—the rejection of Smith and his background by the larger America whose President Smith sought to become. In developing his theme, unfortunately, Mr. Handlin confuses several related but separate issues. Was Smith rejected because he was Irish, or of urban and immigrant background, or a "wet," or was he rejected because he was a Catholic? If his defeat was due to the first two reasons it constituted an obvious denial of the ideal of equal citizenship. But if his defeat was due primarily to his being a Catholic, what does this mean?

Mr. Handlin comments that there was nothing intellectual about Smith's Catholicism and that Smith's response to attacks was (in Handlin's words) that "religion was a matter of the private domain of a man's conscience, that it need have no effect at all on his public role." If this attitude of Smith's is valid, then Mr. Handlin is right in implying that unwillingness to elect a man President because he is a Catholic is as much a denial of fundamental human equality as rejecting him because of the color of his hair. But if—as many have been led to believe—being a Catholic is not just a private matter, but affects one's whole moral existence, including one's "public role," would Mr. Handlin think differently?

Of Three Men

THE CONTENDERS. By John Wain. St. Martin's Press. $3.95.

By THOMAS F. CURLEY

THE FIRST sentence of this book contains the essence of Mr. Wain's style: "This is the story of two men, Robert Lamb and Ned Roper." Notice the masculine directness and the unpretentious punctuation. There is one, and only one, comma just as there is but one period which, despite all the innovations recently visited upon us, is without doubt the best punctuation for ending a sentence.

But punctuation and directness are not everything. The sentence must be related to the book as a whole if one is to savor its meaning and ambiguity. First of all, the sentence is not true; but neither is it untrue nor, wretched triteness, half-true. It is two-thirds true. If after finishing the novel, the reader will return immediately to the first sentence, he will then, and then only, appreciate the full tonal effect that Mr. Wain achieves in just twelve words.

The Contenders is really a story of three men, the third being Clarence (alias Joe) Shaw who is the narrator, the buffer and the referee of this two hundred and seventy-nine page match between Lamb and Roper. Or so it seems. Shaw is even more than that, however. He's the hero!

The clue to Mr. Wain's subtlety is his ability to say plainly and tersely what he does not mean. And that's no mean achievement. I am sure that the crowds of critics who have and will read *The Contenders* as just another novel with satirical underclothes are going to find themselves among the tulips.

Let us see what Mr. Wain is saying, always bearing in mind that it is almost what he does not mean. Robert Lamb and Ned Roper are competing with each other for prestige. Alias Joe, on the contrary, is non-competitive. He is fascinated by the battle between Robert the artist and Ned the potter, even though he cannot take part in the sport. Shaw is delivered from his role as spectator when Robert Lamb leaves his third steady girl, Pepina, in order to chase around Paris after his second steady girl, and first wife, who has since married Roper, Lamb's perennial opponent in the game of life. What do you think Shaw does? He seeks out Pepina, finds her and takes her "Home."

" 'What is your name?' Pepina asked.

" 'Clarence Shaw,' I said."

Now we're getting close. The true blue competition in this novel is not that between the artist and the maker of pottery; it is that between Joe and Clarence. Joe is a nobody, a good Joe; Clarence, however, is

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a true-blue-born Englishman. One has only to consider the derivation of the name to recognize this. "Clarence" derives from the Latin, "Clarus," meaning clear or illustrious. And what of Pepina, the Italian girl whom Clarence, it is clear, is about to marry as the book ends. The purists may not like this but it is clear that one must be something of a punster to get at Wain or Pepina. Just pronounce Pepina to rhyme with "pep in her." Joe, it is clear, becomes Clarence (clear and illustrious) because he meets an Italian girl with some "pep-in-her."

After attentive study the moral is unearthed: Long after the putative and esteemed contenders, Lamb and Roper, are forgotten, the children of the children of the children of the illustrious Clarence and the vigorous Pepina will be peopling the English countryside. As Shakespeare always said:

The Englishman Italianate
Is a good thing for Church
and State.

Critics of Camus

ALBERT CAMUS: THE INVINCIBLE SUMMER. By Albert Maquet. Translated by Herma Briffault. Braziller. $3.75.

ALBERT CAMUS: A STUDY OF HIS WORK. By Philip Thody. Hamish Hamilton. (Distributed by Macmillan). $3.75.

By BERNARD G. MURCHLAND

THERE are at least three special difficulties the critic of Albert Camus must overcome in evaluating his work. First of all, the evolving and incomplete character of the Nobel prize winner's position makes it difficult to catch him twice, so to speak, at the same place. It is necessary but difficult to distinguish the enduring, deep themes of Camus' art from the experimental framework of much of his writing. It is necessary to share to some extent in the author's uneasiness and search for equilibrium in order to determine precisely what he is trying to say at any given point.

Secondly, the intimate relationship between what Camus *thinks* and what he *feels*—two quite different manners of assessing reality—gives rise to a radical ambiguity that is a constant pitfall to the critic as well as the reader. This explains why Camus is constantly explaining his own thought to the public through letters, lectures and interviews. On one occasion, he said: "I am not a philosopher and I can speak only of what I have experienced. . . . Nothing authorizes me to judge in a detached way an epoch of which I am completely a part. I judge from within, merging myself with it." One of the greatest errors that can be made in Camus' respect is to mistake his frequent flights of feeling, however lucidly they may be expressed, for reasoned judgments.

Finally, (and this peculiarity is more typical of Camus than any writer I know) there is about his writing a quiet charm and a kind of pleading sympathy that urge his readers, with something akin to the force of seduction, to count themselves enthusiastically and uncritically in his camp. Camus has, in a word, so defined his position that it is extremely dangerous to brand him with any of the traditional irons of criticism.

It is important to bear these difficulties in mind as we consider two works of criticism that have been recently published on Camus. M. Maquet, a young Belgian who is presently an instructor in French literature at the University of Turin, avoids the real difficulties involved by keeping his objectives frankly simple. He offers first a brief biographical sketch, noting Camus' North African background, his work as a journalist and a resistant, his interest in the theater and his later development as a militant and a rebel (that is, his protest against the injustice, violence and imposed slavery of the world). Camus' passionate desire for happiness, which I consider the most fundamental theme of his writings, dates from his early Mediterranean background and Maquet has orientated his study properly by insisting upon this point.

In the second (and longest) section of his work, "The Writer and Thinker," Maquet attempts to chart the stages of Camus' intellectual and artistic evolution through an analysis of his principal works. His method here is primarily that of plot summary interspersed with his own linking observations, plus critical quotations from a variety of sources and some illuminating comments from Camus' lesser known essays and letters. Maquet is fairly successful in demonstrating the general pattern of the French writer's development, which began with his early essays (principally *Nuptials*). The young author felt the "poetic luxuriance" of things and perceived the "duty of happiness."

Then, suddenly, the climate of enchantment dissolves into a bitter obsession with the absurd. *The Stranger* and *The Myth of Sisyphus,* together with the two plays, "Caligula" and "Cross Purposes," were concerned primarily with the crisis of the individual, the lonely exile struggling for happiness and meaningfulness beneath the immense and senseless burden of existence. Camus' vision now expands to include the suffering and unhappiness of all mankind in *The Rebel* and *The Plague*—two powerful works in which the values of justice, loyalty, and courage appear on the frontiers of the absurd.

Finally, the Camusian art becomes more serene, disinterested and assumes something of a redemptive dimension. In *The Plague,* Camus was interested only in serving men, not saving them. In *The Fall* and his recent *Exile and the Kingdom* he introduces new values of penance and expiation. Maquet summarizes his analysis: "Camus has never stopped composing this hymn [to happiness] through the long Odyssey which, after a period of exile in the darkest swamps of nihilism, was to bring him back to the smooth shores of Ithaca."

His analysis is not without value. It will be particularly useful to those unfamiliar with Camus' work or familiar only with certain of his books. But it does not escape a regrettable lack of discernment that condemns it to a position of second-

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ary importance. Maquet does not seem to know where to lay stress and certainly misses a number of opportunities to point out and delineate more fully the fundamental notions of the Camusion vision.

Philip Thody, of Queen's University in Belfast, has written a much more satisfying book. Like Maquet, his method is fundamentally one of textual analysis through plot summary. But he is much more successful in achieving critical detachment and depth. He also makes more effective use of the literature previously published on his subject, (it should be noted that both books contain excellent biographies) and succeeds far better than Maquet in relating the principal points of Camus' work to the perennial themes of human destiny and the particular social and spiritual crisis of our day. He attempts to judge Camus as Camus judges others—*from within.* This peculiar quality of empathy accounts for the superiority of Thody's book and its general excellence as a work of literary criticism. This excellence is nowhere more evident than in the chapter on "True Rebellion and False Rebels." Writes Thody: "From *A Note on Revolt* [1945] onwards, Camus is sure of what revolt means for him. It protests against absurdity, suffering and injustice and creates a moral value based on the idea of moderation. . . . It implies the recognition of the integrity of the individual as the basic value, and the acceptance, in politics, of relative aims that will respect this integrity.

In many ways, Camus is restating the basic principles of liberal humanism. In a deeper sense, he is exploring and justifying the immense potential man has for becoming himself. The Christian might profitably pick up where Camus leaves off to examine, perhaps more significantly than has yet been done by the theologians, the human implications of Revelation. For Camus has shown, as no other writer has, that absurdity—in all its manifestations of nihilism, hatred and atheism—must, if we bear with it, ultimately be creative and bear some ontological relationship to hope and fidelity.

Thody has a final chapter entitled "Achievement and Limitations" that is in keeping with the spirit of the book. In it he attempts a critical summary of Camus as an author. One unhestitatingly agrees that from time to time good intentions have gotten in the way of good art and Camus has written some indisputably inferior plays. Nor is he always equally penetrating and original. He owes a great deal indeed to other thinkers—even when he does not acknowledge his debt. One agrees, too, that Camus' lyrical essays and his novels (*The Stranger, The Plague,* and *The Fall*) are the best part of his work. He does not rate substantially, nor does he pretend to, as a metaphysician. But Mr. Thody makes one or two criticisms that this reviewer respectfully takes exception to. For example, he criticizes *The Myth of Sisyphus* as "philosophically impossible." "Camus is acutely and emotionally aware of the absurd," he wrotes, "but is unable to communicate this awareness in rational and persuasive terms," and adds that Camus expresses a "feeling" rather than "an exact and convincing notion." I cannot see how this in any way invalidates Camus' position.

Again, Thody notes the "relative failure" of *The Rebel.* Unquestionably it is a work of limited perfection. But if it is to be judged in relation to the central sentiment that motivated it, its "lop-sided character" can, to a large extent at least, be justified. Camus in this book is interested in criticizing only those revolutions and rebels that betray their ideals. It does not necessarily follow that those revolutions which succeeded are relevant to his thesis.

However, there is a danger that these reservations degenerate into a form of quibbling. Professor Thody's points, for the most part, are well taken and his book is a fine introduction to one of the greatest minds of our day.

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THOMAS MOLNAR will present certain impressions the United States has made on him since his arrival from Europe nine years ago. "For Americans, other nations, other civilizations, languages and ways of life appear to be vaguely unreal. . . . Americans hardly recognise the reality of other civilizations and world views; for them the world remains raw material to be shaped, a community which is not yet, but which one day may be, will be, Americanized."

JAMES B. KELLEY writes about the comparisons that have been made recently between American and Soviet schools. "Actually I am made far more fearful for our future by a story in one of our national magazines about an American Rhodes scholar who had to ask his tutor to assign him books only in English, than I am by any reports on Soviet technology."

SAM HYNES discusses the rise in cultural exchanges between the United States and Soviet Russia. "The year is 1911: Diaghilev's company was making its first appearance in England with Pavlova and Nijinsky as its stars. That same year *The Cherry Orchard* was first performed in London and the next year *The Brothers Karamazov* was first published in English; English intellectuals fell in love with Russian writing and Russian dancing all at once . . . A cousin of England's king was on the Russian throne, and there were no passports . . . To us, looking back over almost fifty years, that world before the war seems incredibly innocent and incredibly remote."

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